

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 NIC-01 OMB-01 SAJ-01 IO-14 ACDA-19 DRC-01

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R 040940Z APR 74

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 250

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 HONG KONG 3816

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJ: THE CURRENT MOVEMENT TARGETS ARMY LEADERS

SUMMARY. THERE IS NEW EVIDENCE OF CONTINUING ATTACK ON THE POLITICAL POSITIONS OCCUPIED BY CHINA'S MILITARY COMMANDERS. VIEWED FROM HERE THE PRESSURE BEHIND THIS ATTACK DOES NOT SEEM TO COME FROM CHOU EN-LAI. WE SEE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COMMANDERS' PRESENT TROUBLES AND THEIR PAST CLASHES WITH LEFTISTS. MADAME MAO AND HER COHORTS WANT PARTY POSITIONS HELD BY THE PLA LEADERS TURNED OVER TO CADRE MORE SUBSERVIENT TO THE LEFT. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ACCEPTANCE BY EIGHT TOP PLA COMMANDERS OF THEIR TRANSFERS LAST DECEMBER HAS NOT STOPPED POLITICAL ATTACKS ON MILITARY FIGURES. THE LATEST TO BE HIT ARE THE TOP TWO PLA MEN IN SHASI, HOME PROVINCE OF THE NOW FAMOUS "BLACK " OPERA " THREE VISITS TO TAOFENG." POSTERS IN

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SHANSI'S CAPITAL CITY HAVE COMMANDED THE TWO SHANSI

ARMYMEN--CCP FIRST SECRETARY HSIEH CHEN-HUA AND CCP SECRETARY TSAO CHUNG-NAN -- TO "BOW THEIR HEADS" (PEKING 0530). BROADCASTS EARLIER DEMANDED SUCH A GESTURE FROM THOSE WHO HAD APPROVED "THREE VISITS" (HONG KONG 3135). IF HSIEH AND TSAO WERE ACTUALLY BEHIND THE OPEAR, THEIR FUTURE WOULD SEEM LIMITED.

2. A MORE IMPORTANT PLA LEADER UNDER PERSONAL ATTACK IS TSENG SSU-YU. ONE OF THE EIGHT COMMANDERS SHIFTED IN DECEMBER, TSENG IS THE FORMER BOSS OF WUHAN MILITARY REGION AND HUPEH PROVINCE. AN ANTI-TSENG CAMPAIGN BEGAN IN WUHAN LAST FALL (1973 HONG KONG 11800) AND HAS CONTINUED THERE AT LEAST THROUGH MID-MARCH. SINCE CADRE IN HONG KONG ARE ALREADY INDIRECTLY DESCRIBING TSENG AS A LIN PIAO PROTEGE, HE IS PROBABLY IN TROUBLE.

3. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THE COMMANDERS INVOLVED IN LAST DECEMBER'S SHUFFLE WAS POLITBURO MEMBER HSU SHIH-YU. NOT ONLY HAS HSU HEADED THE MOST POPULOUS REGION , A VITAL AREA THAT INCLUDES SHANGHAI AND ENCOMPASSED THE BASES OF FIVE POLITBURO MEMBERS, BUT HSU WAS ALSO THE MOST SENIOR REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDER, HAVING SERVED AS NANKING REGION BOSS SINCE 1954. HSU'S MOVE WAS KEY TO MAKING ALL THE OTHER COMMANDERS SEEM UNDER CRITICISM. REPORTEDLY A LETTER ADDRESSED TO HIM FROM CHIANG CHING, WIFE OF MAO IS BEING CIRCULATED AS PART OF A CENTRAL COMMITTEE DOCUMENT THROUGHOUT KWANGTUNG WHERE HSU PRESENTLY RESIDES. THE LETTER PRAISES UNITS UNDER SHU'S COMMAND FOR THEIR JANUARY VICTORY IN THE PARACELS, BUT THEN APPARENTLY CHIDES HSU AND OTHER KWANGTUNG LEADERS FOR SHORTCOMINGS IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL CAMPAIGN (OIR 05250, 0529). THERE IS THUS FAR NO SUGGESTION THAT HSU WILL BE SACKED, AND HE CONTINUES TO APPEAR PUBLICLY. BUT THE CHIANG CHING LETTER, COMING ON TOP OF HIS ORDERED TRANSFER, REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF FACE FOR HSU.

5. SEVEN YEARS AGO, COMMANDERS LIKE TSENG AND HSU WERE LITERALLY HOLDING CHINA TOGETHER. TSENG ROSE TO PROMINENCE IN AUGUST 1967, FOLLOWING THE FAMOUS, "WUHAN INCIDENT". HE HELPED SUPPRESS THE CITY'S FEUDING RED GUARD FACTIONS AND SET THE MODEL FOR SIMILAR PLA CRACKDOWNS THROUGHOUT CHINA.

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AS A RESULT OF THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY REGIONAL MILITARY FIGURES, THE PLA GAINED POLITICAL CONTROL OVER MOST OF CHINA OUTSIDE PEKING.

6. TSENG HAD BEEN DESPATCHED TO WUHAN BY LIN PIAO. HOWEVER, HIS MISSION TO CRUSH FACTIONAL FIGHTING THERE MUST HAVE ENJOYED THE BACKING OF CHOU EN-LAI AS WELL(SEE SCM SUPPLEMENT 199). IT WAS THE DETENTION OF CHOU'S EMISSARY TO WUHAN, VICE

PREMIRE AND INTERNAL SECURITY CHIEF HSIEH FU-CHIH,
THAT (ALONG WITH THE BEATING ADMISTERED ANOTHER CENTER
REPRESENTATIVE) CONSTITUTED THE "WUHAN INCIDENT".

7. DURING THE 1967-71 PERIOD THE COMMANDERS REAPED THE REWARDS
OF THEIR POWER IN THE PROVINCES. TWO WERE NAMED TO THE POLIT-
BURO IN 1969 ALONG WITH HUANG YUNG-SHENG, WHO WAS A REGIONAL
COMMANDER HIMSELF UNTIL HIS 1968 PROMOTION TO PLA CHIEF OF
STAFF. SEVEN OF THE TEN BECAME PROVINCIAL BOSSES WHEN THEIR
RESPECTIVE PARTY COMMITTEES WERE FORMED IN 1970-71. THE PERIOD
WAS ONE OF SHARPENING STRUGGLE BETWEEN LIN PIAO AND CIVILIANS
AT THE PART CENTER, AND EACH SIDE SEEMED TO BE WOOING THE
COMMANDERS.

8. IN THE END, WHEN THE SEPTEMBER 1971 SHOWDOWN BETWEEN
LIN AND THE CIVILIANS CAME, TSENG SSU-YU, HSU SHIH-YU AND
MOST OF THE OTHER COMMANDERS DID NOT SUPPORT THEIR PLA CHIEF.
(TWO WHO MAY HAVE BACKED LIN, LUNG SHU-CHIN IN SINKIANG
AND LIANG HSING-CHU IN SZECHWAN, SOON DISAPPEARED FROM VIEW.)
THE COMMANDERS' LOYALTY TO MAO AND CHOU WAS CRICIAL TO
THE SUCCESS OF THE CIVILIAN EFFORT TO OUST LIN'S GROUP.
AT A TIME WHEN THE ARMY WAS BEING ROCKED BY
THE NEWS THAT HALF OF THE MILITARY REPRESENTATION ON THE
POLITBURO HAD BEEN ELIMINATED, THE COMMANDERS HELD THE PLA
BEHIND THE CENTER.

9. THE AFTERMATH OF LIN'S FALL WAS A PERIOD MARKED BY CHOU'S
FOREIGN AFFAIRS INITIATIVES AND HIS MODERATE AND PRAGMATIC
DOMESTIC POLICIES. DURING THIS TIME, THE CONTINUED LOYALTY
OF THE COMMANDERS SEEMED AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF CHOU'S
STRENGTH. THEIR POLITICAL AUTHORITY, HOWEVER, GREW MORE TENUOUS.

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10. THE COMMANDERS' POWER, GRANTED THEM DURING A PERIOD OF DOMESTIC CHAOS, WAS MARKEDLY OUT OF FASHION ONCE THE COUNTRY HAD RETURNED TO NORMALCY. IN 1972, A CENTRAL DOCUMENT (NO. 12) WAS RELEASED THAT PORTRAYED MAO AS UPSET WITH THE MILITARY'S INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS. BY JUNE 1973, EVEN CHOU WAS REPORTEDLY SAYING THE COMMANDERS WOULD HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THEIR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN ROLES. THESE COMMENTS, ALONG WITH THE ALLUSIONS TO THOSE WHO "SEEK HEGEMONY", THE STEADY RETURN OF CIVILIANS TO PROVINCIAL PARTY SECRETARISHIPS, THE REDUCTION OF PLA POLITBURO AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AT THE TENTH PARTY CONGRESS, AND THE OCTOBER-NOVEMBER ATTACKS ON "FEUDAL PRINCES," TOGETHER FORESHADOWED LAST DECEMBER'S SHIFT OF COMMANDERS AND THE BREAKING OF THEIR POLITICAL DOMINATION OVER CHINA'S REGIONS.

11. A FACTOR IN THE COMMANDERS' WILLINGNESS TO STEP ASIDE MAY HAVE BEEN THEIR BELIEF THAT CHOU AND REHABILITATED PROVINCIAL PARTY FIGURES SAW POLICY ISSUES THE SAME WAY
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THEY DID. IN THIS CONNECTION, TENG HSIAO-PING'S DECEMBER RETURN TO THE POLITBURO AND THE MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMISSION LOOMS AS SIGNIFICANT. POSSIBLY THE COMMANDERS RESISTED THE SHIFTS UNTIL ASSURED THAT THE PLA WOULD BE REPRESENTED AT THE TOP BY MEN WITH OUTLOOKS SIMILAR TO THEIRS (TENG MAY HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN INVOLVED IN NEGOTIATING THE COMMANDER RESHUFFLE; IR 684 20073/74). STILL, THEY MUST VIEW THE AFTERMATH OF THE DECEMBER CHANGES WITH GRAVE CONCERN. THE ANTI-LIN/CONFUCIUS MOVEMENT IS UNFLOODING AT A TIME WHEN MOST OF THE COMMANDERS ARE LEADING UNFAMILIAR TROOPS.

12. IT SEEMS REASONABLE TO SPECULATE THAT CHOU SHARES THE COMMANDER'S CONCERN. INDEED, ONE IS FORCED TO ASK WHY CHOU WOULD FAVOR SHIFTING THE COMMANDERS IN THE FIRST PLACE. IN 1967-68, THEY HAD WORKED TO BRING CHINA BACK FROM CHAOS AND DISORDER. IN 1970-71 THEY HAD FACILITATED THE PURGE OF LIN PIAO, WHO HAD SOUGHT TO GO OVER CHOU'S HEAD TO BECOME

CHIEF OF STATE. SINCE LIN'S FALL , THEY HAVE SEEMINGLY SERVED THE CHOU LEADERSHIP LOYALLY. (THUS FAR, WE HAVE SEEM NO EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY, THOUGH IF PURGES COME, WE WILL.) NOW THE COMMANDERS HAVE APPARENTLY WITHDRAWN FROM PROVINCIAL POLITICS. WOULD CHOU PRESENTLY WANT TO "REWARD" SUCH SEEMINGLY COOPERATIVE FIGURES AS TSENG SSU-YU AND HSU SHIH-YU BY SUBJECTING THEM TO PERSONAL ATTACK?

13. SPECULATING THAT CHOU WOULD NOT, WE FURTHER SUGGEST THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO WOULD LIKE TO CARRY THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE COMMANDERS TO THE END. FOREMOST AMONG THESE IS THE PERSON WHO WROTE THE CHIDING LETTER SENT TO HSU SHIH-YU: CIANG CHING.

14. CHIANG'S DIFFERENCES WITH THE PLA'S PROFESSIONAL ELITE, INCLUDING TODAY'S REGIONAL COMMANDERS, ARE DEEP ROOTED AND FAIRLY WELL KNOWN. IN A SPEECH SHE DELIVERED TO THEM IN APRIL 1967, CHIANG EXPLAINED THAT WHILE "MY HEART STILL BELONGS TO THE ARMY," SHE HAD NOT FORGOTTEN THAT DURING THE YENAN CAVE DAYS, COMMANDERS HAD FORBIDDEN HER TO WEAR THE PLA'S RED-STAR CAP (SCM SUPPLEMENT 192).

15. A KEY ISSUE DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION WAS THE PLA'S
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USE OF FORCE. CHIANG AND THE MILITARY PROFESSIONALS SEEMED CONSISTENTLY TO BE ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE QUESTION. IN EARLY 1967, THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION GROUP WAS PUSHING RELUCTANT ARMY LEADERS TO USE THEIR POWER TO TOPPLE THE ESTABLISHED PARTY LEADERSHIP IN THE PROVINCES. LATER, AS FACTIONAL FIGHTING BETWEEN THE "WINNERS" BEGAN TO ENVELOP THE COUNTRY, THE PLA WAS SPECIFICALLY ENJOINED NOT TO USE FORCE TO SETTLE DISPUTES, A DIRECTIVE THAT RANKLED THE ORDER-ORIENTED COMMANDERS. THEN WITH THE LID STILL ON THE PLA, CHIANG PERSONALLY ESCALATED FACTIONAL VIOLENCE BY PROPOUNDING THE SOLGAN "ATTACK WITH REASON, DEFEND WITH FORCE."

16. THE PLA PUT ITS COLLECTIVE FOORT DOWN FOLLOWING THE JULY 1967 EVENTS IN WUHAN, WHEN THE LOCAL COMMANDER APPARENTLY DEMANDED THE RIGHT TO USE FORCE TO CRUSH DISSIDENTS. THE COMMANDER WAS SACKED, BUT HIS REPLACEMENT, TSENG SSU-YU, SUPPRESSED THE FEUDING FACTIONS (ABOVE)--- THE DEED FOR WHICH HE IS NOW BEING CRITICIZED BY NAME.

17. CHIANG WAS OUTRAGED BY WHAT SHE TERMED THE "WUHAN MUTINY". SHE DEMANDED THAT THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION BE EXTENDED TO THE PLA. INSTEAD, THE CENTER DECIDED TO GIVE THE COMMANDERS AUTHORITY TO CRUSH FACTIONALISM ELSEWHERE IN CHINA. CHIANG WAS FORCED TO ENDORSE THIS NEW POLICY IN SEPTEMBER 1967.

18. THE FOLLOWING MARCH, HOWEVER, SHE HELPED ENGINEER THE
PURGE OF PLA ACTING CHIEF OF STAFF YANG CHENG-WU, WHOM LIN
PIAO AT THE TIME DENOUNCED FOR HAVING TRIED TO ELIMINATE CHIANG.
YANG HAD FIRMLY BACKED THE PLA'S CRACKDOWN ON FACTIONAL
FIGHTING. THEN IN 1971, LIN PIAO, HUANG YUNG-SHENG AND OTHERS
IN THE PLA WHO ALSO HELPED SUPPRESS
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, ARMED FORCES, SLOGANS, PROPAGANDA, POLITICAL SITUATION, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974HONGK03816
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740076-0738
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740466/aaaacieb.tel
Line Count: 278
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 15 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 JUL 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <25 FEB 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE CURRENT MOVEMENT TARGETS ARMY LEADERS SUMMARY. THERE IS NEW EVIDENCE OF CONTINUING ATTACK ON THE
TAGS: PINT, CH, PLA, (HSIAO CHEN-HUA), (TSAO CHUNG-NAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005